

Contributions.

JUST AFTER CHRIST.

M. M. STERLING.

When Augustus Cæsar issued an edict for taxation on all the nations subject to the Roman Empire, king Herod commanded all under his power to come to the city of his people, that an estimate of their person and effect might be taken. Therefore, the parents of Jesus departed from Nazareth, where they then resided, and came to Bethlehem of Judea, the city of the nativity of David and his ancestors. Christ was born here four years before the date from which we count the years of the Lord, which makes it in the year of the world 4004, or four years before Christ. Having complied with the ceremonies and rites contained in the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary, with the little child Jesus, journeyed into Galilee to their own city, Nazareth; thence again to the birthplace of Christ. The wise men, or Magi from the East, came to worship him. This refers to the learned philosophers who came from Persia where they belonged. They saw his star appear in the East; this, probably, referring to Babylonia Chaldea, the direction of the star. These wise men came to Jerusalem and inquired for the King, saying they had seen his star, and they were come to worship him. The whole city was alarmed at the unexpected arrival of the Magi, an event that very much irritated Herod the Great, whose ambitious mind feared a rival in the report that a new king was born. He disguised his sentiments, and received the wise men, asking of them where Christ should be born; remembering that the prophets had particularly foretold the birthplace of Christ, they promptly answered, "In Bethlehem of Judea." The tyrant king, in consequence, ordered them to Bethlehem, earnestly entreating them to send him word, immediately on finding the child, so that he might also go and worship him. This was hypocrisy, for in his secret heart he vowed to destroy him, looking upon the child as designed to expel him from the throne of Judea; instead of a prince whose dominion is in heaven and not upon earth. The Magi, having attained what information they desired at Jerusalem, set forward under the guidance of the same star that had conducted them from their own country, but had left them on their arrival in Judea; therefore, by the reappearance of the star, they were conducted to the habitation of the infant Messiah. No sooner had the wise men departed from Bethlehem, than Joseph was warned of God in a dream to take the young child and his mother and

flee into Egypt, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Herod, irritated by disappointment, resolved to accomplish by cruelty a resolution, which he thought would be the means of accomplishing his wicked design. He issued orders to the soldiers to go throughout Bethlehem and the coasts thereof, destroying all the children two years old and under, thinking that Jesus might be among the number slain.

After the death of Herod, Joseph was warned to return to the land of Israel. He accordingly obeyed the command of God; but hearing that Archelaus succeeded his father, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into Galilee. Archelaus was as wicked and barbarous as Herod; but the ruler of Judea, a prince called Antipas, was kind and benevolent. Thus it was that Jesus dwelt in Nazareth, "That he might be called a Nazarene."

Archelaus was banished from his dominions about ten years after the death of Herod the Great. The governors after him were often changed, but seldom for the better. Near the sixteenth year of Christ, Pontius Pilate became procurator of Judea. It was during his administration that Christ was condemned to the cross.

THE HUDSON REVIVAL.

J. L. GILLIN.

Four weeks of faithful preaching were not without results. The Gospel is still "the power of God unto salvation." Our King still is of the same disposition as when the prophet said of him, "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity." And sin is just as hateful in his sight as it was when he died that it "might become exceeding sinful."

The meetings started under very inauspicious portents: Corn husking at its height, roads bad and weather far worse. But the condition of the elements was the friendliest of all which we had to face. Revivals had been attempted in each of the two other churches in town and ended in failure. And that describes the condition of the Brethren Church by inference.

The cause of these unswerving conditions lay not at the doors of the preacher, but in the fact that the church members had stultified their efforts for righteousness and had strangled their spirituality by their indifference to iniquity and even their active support of it in an illegal saloon, which was kept running to attract trade to the town.

True, there were some who were opposed to it, but who either from fear or from spiritual laziness did not molest the awful

business. Now, if God's Word be not a lie, no church or church member can be entirely consecrated to God,—nay, more, can be in a state of growth, who in this day of light upholds by voice, vote or even by silence the public crime of a community putting the bottle to his neighbor's lips for the sake of his trade.

And, he who supports the saloon that the law says is *illegal* is not only in very great danger of losing his spirituality and his soul but is as much of an outlaw in intent and purpose as the keeper of the saloon. The town was under the domination of this imp of Satan, the councilmen were either the creatures of his will, or men whom he knew he need not fear. The churches for this and other allied causes had lost their spirituality and power. Such were the conditions, when the Hudson church beginning to realize its state and the results of such conditions asked the Enon Church to send them her pastor to hold them a meeting. But not only the condition of the town and church were against the chance of success seemingly, but the condition of the Enon pastor was to all appearance the least suggestive of success. He had had no experience to speak of in revival effort, was reared here, joined church here and ordained to the ministry here. The only thing in his favor was that most of the Hudsonites believed in him, and that God had been using him in some slight way. Many prophesied failure. But the time has not passed when God can and will use "the things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are."

The work opened with a two weeks' bombardment of the sinners in the church. During this time the devil was telling the church members that the preacher would ruin the church. And many good people had so far lost their respect for righteousness and their faith in the ultimate victory of right, that they believed him, and begged the preacher to desist. But he was determined to see whether God meant what he said to Jeremiah and Isaiah and John the Baptist, whether faith was a reality and God a lover of righteousness and a hater of evil, or faith only a tradition founded on fiction, and God a being to be reasoned about and discussed in glittering generalities in which there is no living belief and to be adored with an adoration that comes only from mocking lips. And he found God to be the God of the old prophets; of Daniel, and Jesus and Paul. He thundered with all his power against the blatant hypocrisy of some of the church members until they got penitent and made their wrongs right. Then he began on the sinners. And he tried to speak the truth. Howls were